

Message Text

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13

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCCT-02 EUR-25 AID-20 DRC-01 /142 W

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P 200740Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2896

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0689

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREA - THE AFCC OF THE NORTH DEMANDS ACTION

REF ADDIS ABABA 9779

1. THE AFCC OF THE NORTH HAS NOT HITHERTO REACTED VISIBLY TO KALEIDOSCOPIIC POLITICAL EVENTS NOW TAKING PLACE IN ADDIS ABABA. IN RECENT PAST, IT HAS ISSUED CALLS FOR "ETHIOPIA FIRST," PUBLISHED LISTS OF NORTHERN COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE SWORN SUPPORT, MADE SOME ARRESTS, IMPOSED A CURFEW, ASSURED FOREIGNERS THAT THEY ARE NOT IN DANGER, AND INDULGED IN SOME CENSORSHIP. BY AND LARGE, WHILE MEETING ALMOST DAILY, AND RATHER PUBLICLY AT SECOND DIVISION HEADQUARTERS (THE DIVISIONAL ORDINANCE OFFICER, MAJ. NESIBU TAYE, APPEARS TO BE A KEY AFCC LEADER), IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE OTHERWISE INTERFERED IN THE PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT IN ERITREA. THE ATTITUDE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF WATCHFUL WAITING.

2. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES WITHIN THE AFCC OF THE NORTH, IT HAS NOW, PERHAPS STIMULATED BY THE MASS RESIGNATIONS OF ERITREAN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ADDIS ABABA (REFTEL) REPORTEDLY

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ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM ON AUGUST 19, IN THE FORM OF A LETTER TO

THE AFCC IN ADDIS ABABA, SAYING THAT IF THE LATTER DOES NOT TAKE ACTION TOWARD A SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN QUESTION WITHIN TEN DAYS, THE AFCC OF THE NORTH WILL.

3. SHOULD THE AFCC OF THE NORTH, IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING INACTION IN ADDIS ABABA, DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION OF ITS OWN, THE RELATIVE UNITY OF THE MILITARY TO DATE IN ITS EFFORT TO REMAKE ETHIOPIA WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE SHATTERED. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, NO INDICATIONS AT THIS TIME THAT THE AFCC OF THE NORTH IS PREPARED TO COME TO TERMS WITH ANY ELF FACTIONS, ALTHOUGH THERE DOES APPEAR TO BE A DEFACTO TRUCE IN ERITREA THAT HAS LASTED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO CREDIT THE AFCC OF THE NORTH WITH SECESSIONIST TENDENCIES, BUT IT MAY WELL HAVE DETERMINED THAT SOME SOLUTION, POLITICAL OR OTHERWISE, IS NOW OF SUCH OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MUST BE FORCED TO RECOGNIZE THIS AND TAKE ACTION.
SHERRY

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